

Your John 16:33 Prescription for Pain and Problems

When I stretch out my arms and turn a full circle, almost everyone brushed by my fingertips is in the middle of staggering hardship right now. I hardly know a single family untouched by life-altering medical diagnoses. And then there are those with immense financial strain, marriages for which we're holding our breath and kids breaking their parents' hearts.

Last week, I attended the funeral of a friend, and now another dear friend holds the hand of her mother as she slips away. I wake up in the night and groan in prayer for their painful, intense journey, waiting for the news that this beautiful woman has left us and gone to be with Jesus.

Sorrow upon sorrow.

One friend was hesitant to share fresh, hard news from his family. "There's just so much hurt in everyone's lives right now. I hate to add to the pile."

Such a pile.

But we turn to Jesus and listen. "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33, NIV).

The word "trouble" means pressure, and I immediately think of how my heart feels these days. Squeezed. Aching.

It seems fitting that Jesus gives only one instruction, and it's specifically what to do with my heart, which is being crushed under all this hard news.

Take heart.

Do something with your heart!

This same instruction is found in the Gospel of Mark. Jesus and his disciples are leaving Jericho, and a blind man calls out to Jesus from the side of the road, begging for mercy.

(Mercy. Yes, please. Couldn't we all use a dose of that right now?)

Jesus tells his disciples to call the man, so they holler: "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you" (Mark 10:49b, MEV).

Forgive me, but I hear this in a British accent, and it makes me laugh out loud: "Cheer up, man! Do something with that discouraged heart of yours. On your feet—spit-spot!"

There's something wonderfully hopeful about being told to pull your heart together and get to your feet. With anticipation, the man jumps up and goes to Jesus, and he finds that mercy for which he's been desperately looking.

As pressures continue in my corner of the world, this is what I continue to do every morning, every hour of the day and in the dark hours of the night: I feel the pressure of troubles and obediently cheer up my heart by thinking about God's promises, jump to my feet with hope and go to Jesus, in anticipation that He can and will do good and show mercy to me and all my people. He's so kind.

Cheerio. {eoa}

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